



PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN DESTINATION STRATFORD AND THE STRATFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY CREATES STRATFORD'S FIRST EVER POET LAUREATE PROGRAM AND NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN NOW

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(STRATFORD, ON) To complement with the 2023 Council-approved City of Stratford Municipal Cultural Plan, [Destination Stratford](#) and the [Stratford Public Library](#) are partnering to embark on a three-year Poet Laureate pilot program. The program introduces the positions of Poet Laureate and Youth Poet Laureate to showcase creative literary artists and ideas through innovative events and initiatives. The three-year pilot runs through December 31, 2027.

Creators appointed to posts in the program will share stories through poetry, literature, spoken word and oral-history, and even music and the performing arts, to a wide and appreciative audience, strengthening the public's relationship to the literary arts, storytelling, culture and heritage.

Stratford's Poet Laureate Program will celebrate the contributions of literary and spoken word artists to the cultural life of our city, and to meet the needs of our diverse and evolving community. Through this program, we can gather, preserve and share unique Stratford and area stories that shape our area now and in the future.

"Given our incredible cultural heritage, it was surprising that Stratford didn't already have a poet laureate in place," said Zac Gribble, Executive Director, Destination Stratford. "We are thrilled to partner with Stratford Public Library and collaborate with the City and Council to introduce the Stratford Poet Laureate pilot program. It's a great example of a meaningful, community-centered initiative that flows beautifully from the Municipal Cultural Plan."

"We are thrilled to collaborate with Stratford's very first Poet Laureate and Youth Poet Laureate," said Krista Robinson, CEO of the Stratford Public Library. "Stratford is brimming with literary talent, and we look forward to elevating and honouring these voices as they share their work with our city."

Poet Laureate Position Information

The Poet Laureate position will serve to honour a poet (aged 25 years and older) who writes excellent poetry and focuses on themes that are relevant to the people who live in Stratford and area. This poet will serve as an ambassador for our arts, culture and heritage sectors, and help to celebrate poetry and the arts – particularly the literary arts. As an ambassador

for poetry and literature, the Poet Laureate will be invited to attend events to share works and raise the profile of the literary arts in Stratford and the area.

Youth Poet Laureate Position Information

The Youth Poet Laureate position will serve to honour a youth poet (aged 14 to 24 years), who writes excellent poetry and focuses on themes that are relevant to youth who live in Stratford and area. This poet will provide a strong youth voice and will reach out to other youth to inspire interest in poetry and the arts – particularly the literary arts. As an ambassador for youth, poetry, language and the arts, the Youth Poet Laureate will be invited to attend events to share works and increase engagement of youth with the arts.

Eligibility Requirements for both Program Positions

Poet Laureate and Youth Poet Laureate must:

- Be nominated or self-nominate (apply) to serve in the role.
- Meet the age requirements as outlined.
- Have a defined connection to Stratford and area.
- Be a poet, spoken word artist, or storyteller with an established or developing body of work.
- Have a keen interest in poetry or storytelling and the literary and performing arts.
- Be able to be an ambassador for literacy, poetry, storytelling, writers, spoken word artists, and the literary and performing arts.
- Be willing to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the positions as outlined.

Nomination/Application Process for Poet Laureate Program

All candidates must complete the Poet Laureate Program Submission Form on the Stratford Public Library website. Paper forms are available upon request.

For more details and for the nomination form, visit splibrary.ca/poetlaureate.

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